3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

BOOK III—POLITICAL

CHAPTER I

PUNISHMENTS (刑法), *hsing fa*

I. *Punishments not involving death* (活刑), *huo hsing.*

681

Ch'ih (笞), to beat with the small bamboo rod. This rod is about three feet long, and one inch wide, and is applied to the thighs over a space of about six inches. A few thousands of strokes may be given till the thigh bone is made bare. This punishment is inflicted mostly upon the thief. Scholars or dignitaries are exempt from this humiliation. A permanent scar is made which officials make a point of examining when investigating a case. The runners are sometimes bribed by friends to lay on lightly, or reduce the number of blows, or beat the ground. This is a parental form of correction and the prisoner has to thank the magistrate for inflicting it. Tartars, as the conquering race, were exempt from this punishment.

The heavy bamboo, *chang* (杖), about 4 feet long and about 4 inches wide, sometimes made of wood and at other times of bamboo. The punishment meted out varies from 80 to 200 blows. This chastisement is generally to the disobedient and unfilial. The prisoner is bound and held down while being beaten. Another kind of beating is called *t'ou hsing* (頭刑) or *mao pan* (茅板). The instrument used is a large bamboo split in two halves and not polished in the least; a pile of bricks is made, over which the prisoner is bent and this instrument of correction applied to the buttocks. A few tens of blows may be sufficient to cause death. *Li pi chang hsia* (立斃杖下) means to die under the bamboo.

[p.92]

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681

There are three kinds of banishment: one is *liu* (流), transportation for a few hundreds of miles; this punishment is frequently inflicted on persons guilty of adultery, manslaughter, or incendiarism. *T'u* (徒) or *liu t'u* (流徒), is also transportation; but the punishment is often to be confined by night and free by day; this is called *tso t'u* (坐徒). The individual thus punished is neither reckoned worthy of death nor of life; a useless wastrel.

Ch'ung chün (充軍) is banishment beyond the Great Wall, or to the frontier military posts without any hope of a return. This is a heavy military punishment and mostly imposed upon officials and soldiers.

Penal servitude (監禁), *chien chin*, may be for three, eight or for twenty years, or for life. The life sentence is called *lao fan* (牢犯) or *lao chien*, and also *yung yüan* (永遠) *chien chin*. Prisoners on entering jail have their heads shaved, the hair afterwards being left to grow long. No barber is allowed in jail except at New Year times when some favored few may have their beards shaved. The only knife allowed in jail is a piece of broken crockery.

Criminals just taken into custody and awaiting trial, whose offences are slight, and who await the payment of fines or a surety to bail them out, are confined in a guardhouse, *ch'ia chin* (卡禁). A place of confinement better than the guardhouse, into which gentry and scholars are put while waiting for judgment or bail, is called in some cities *tai-chih so* (待質所); in others, *tzŭ-hsin so* (自新所), a penitentiary.

One of the most painful of beatings is termed *t'iao-tzŭ* (條子) or *niu chin* (牛筋), ox sinew stripes. It is inflicted mostly for indecent behaviour. Women are stripped of their upper garments and beaten across the shoulders and back, while men are stripped and suspended by the arms and beaten.

Sometimes a man is kept in custody in the inn, *ya pao tien* (押保店) till the matter is settled. The prisoner in this case has to feed the yamen underlings and give them sufficient opium; if he does not bribe them his chains will not be taken off at night.

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

• 681 A form of punishment meted out to scholars and gentry is beating on the hands with a piece of polished board, such as is used in schools.

To beat on the cheek with a thong of leather fixed to a wooden handle is called *ta tsui pa* (打嘴巴). The instrument is shaped something like the sole of a Chinese shoe. By this punishment the teeth are not infrequently knocked out and the face swells to a great size.

The punishment called *yang pan* (仰板), to beat on the front of the thigh, is reserved for priests, nuns and loose women, and is administered in the public courtyard.

Cages in which prisoners are kept, *lung chin* (籠禁), are of several kinds. *Chan lung* (站櫳) is a standing cage, the height of a man. The top is composed of two boards fitting exactly together, in the centre of which a round hole is cut, the size of a man's neck. The prisoner is put in, and this cover put on and nailed down. The prisoner can just manage to put his hand round and convey some food to his mouth. If he bribes the yamen runners he may get release at night, if not he may be left to stand all the night through.

The *tso* (坐) *lung* or *ai* (矮) *lung* is a kind of cage in which the prisoner may sit on a cross bar or put his legs through the bottom or walk slowly; the neck part is the same as the former.

The cat cage, *mao* (貓) *lung* is too low for the prisoner either to straighten his back or stretch his limbs. A month or two in this and he is turned into a deformed, useless creature. If food is stopped, as is frequently the case, the man dies very quickly. *Chia chin* (枷禁), the cangue, is a heavy wooden frame which divides in the centre into two halves, where a round hole is made to fit the neck. It is carried as a collar by the criminal. If food is allowed it is very difficult to convey it to the mouth. When food is forbidden the prisoner cannot survive more than a few days. The weight of the cangue varies from 20 to 100 catties.

There is also a double cangue for two people. This punishment is for brothers who quarrel, or in cases of adultery.

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681

These criminals are exposed to the public gaze with their offence written on the pillory.

There is even a three-hole cangue into which three people are fixed. This is generally inflicted on gamblers and the smart-fingered gentry.

The boy's cangue is used for boys addicted to gambling or who have entered the boys' secret society known as the 棒棒會.

The *chüeh p'ên* (脚盆) *chia* or *pan t'ou* (蟠頭) *chia*, foot tub or dish cangue, is light, and can easily be carried about the streets. Such is sometimes put on the tax gatherer when he fails to collect the taxes; and he carries it from market to market.

A chain is fastened to a heavy stone and the criminal is chained all day and released at night to sleep in the guard-house. This is *t'ieh lien shih têng* (鐵鍊石磴).

The hand cangue, *shou chia* (手枷), confines the hands as well as the head; the foot cangue, *chüeh* (脚) *chia*, is a wooden block round the two ankles; the wearer can move about slowly. The *yüan yang* (鴛鴦) *chia* confines one foot and one hand of each of two persons. The *yüan* and the *yang* are the mandarin drake and duck which never leave their mates.

Cutting off the ears, *hsüeh êrh to* (削耳朵), was a punishment in use up to the present year.

Branding on the forehead, *mei hsing* (墨刑), or *tz'ŭ tzŭ* (刺字), is an ancient punishment and was still in use until the revolution. A needle is used to prick the characters on the skin, then indigo is rubbed into the wound, and when healed the blue characters are seen. The punishment is generally inflicted on pickpockets and swindlers.

Ko chüeh chin (割脚筋), to cut the tendons at the back of the foot is also a very ancient punishment and is still practised. It is generally inflicted upon robbers only, as the man is lamed for life.

Another punishment is to carry an iron bar of from 30 to 40 catties in weight, *pei t'ieh kan* (背鐵杆). An iron ring is welded round the neck and the bar is attached to this with

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681 a chain. If the criminal bribes the blacksmith and runners he may get released from it at night. The man who has suffered this penalty often bears the nick-name of *t'ieh kan* for life.

Other punishments are *ch'a êrh chien* (插耳箭), to double the ears and put a bamboo needle through the cartilage; *ts'o ching* (剉脛), breaking the ankle bone, and the *t'ieh ch'ien* (鐵鉗), or iron tongs. This is an iron frame-work into which the hands and feet are fastened, and the whole is suspended from the neck; the part at the back of the neck being sharp, immediately the hands let go, or the feet move, it cuts the flesh. This is a punishment for the gambler.

II. *Fei hsing* (匪刑), or *k'o hsing* (酷刑), illegal punishments.

Ta chia kuan (打加官), putting on the mask, that is, to suffocate the criminal by putting several layers of paper soaked in lime water over the face. This is done by yamen runners at the wink of the official owing to the case being one of danger to himself and to the district.

Chêng cha pao (蒸鮓包). The unfortunate is put into a cage or pit, and covered up with quick-lime, water is then poured in and the man is roasted or boiled alive. In some cases fire crackers are wound round the body and set alight.

To light the candle; the criminal is chained to a heavy frame, his body is then wound with cotton wool, which is soaked with oil and lighted at the crown of the head.

III. *Death penalty.* (死刑) *Ssŭ hsing.*

Tiao kao lung (吊高櫳), is to hang up in a cage by the neck. The cage has no bottom and stands about ten feet high. The neck is encircled by the top cover of the cage, the head being outside. Death comes very soon, and it is reckoned a light penalty because the body is not mutilated. Any district magistrate may use this method of execution and also *Yung k'ou chia* (擁口枷), or the clasp-throat cangue. This is a heavy oak pillory and is over 100 catties in weight.

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681

The neck is clasped tight and the frame is so large that food cannot be conveyed to the mouth ; the criminal soon collapses and, with the fall, the neck is generally broken.

Death by strangling is called *chiao hsing* (絞 刑). Three posts are fixed into the ground. To the centre one the criminal is tied, a rope with a running noose is put round his neck, and then one man pulls at each end of the rope, two strong pulls ; the rope is then fastened to the side posts ; then the doomed man gets a heavy kick in the abdomen and the breath is driven from his body by the rectum. This is most frequently administered to soldiers for breach of military laws.

To cut off the head of a person worthy of death after death has come from other causes, or to cut the corpse limb from limb, is called, *chua shih* (抓 屍).

In the punishment called *ch'êng kan ch'êng jen* (秤 桿 秤 人), to weigh a man on the scales, huge iron clamps are driven into the ribs on both sides of the backbone and a rope is attached. The unfortunate man is then raised over a cross beam to the height of about 8 or 10 feet from the ground, where he hangs suspended face downwards, and may live for two or three days.

The family of a rebel, whether official or civilian, is exterminated and his goods are confiscated. This is called *wa kên tuan miao* (挖 根 斷 苗), or *chu tsu* (誅 族).

Another punishment is to nail the living door god, *ting huo mên-shên* (釘 活 門 神), that is, crucifixion. The criminal's hands and feet are nailed to a door or cross. The nails are made red-hot and driven through the palms of the hands and the front of the foot. Hot nails are used to staunch the bleeding. A hole is made through the back of the cross through which the queue is put to keep up the head. Sometimes the head is held up by nailing the skin on either side of the neck. The wretch may live two or three days unless he can bribe the yamen runners, through his friends, to give him a dose of opium. He is raised so high that a large crowd of people can stare at him. This punishment can be inflicted without reference to a superior officer, as it does not mutilate the body.

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681 *Ling ch'ih sui kua* (凌遲碎剮), to hack in pieces. This punishment was, prior to the Revolution, inflicted on both men and women, usually for the murder of a parent or a husband. The criminal was tied to a stake at the crossing of two streets or on the execution ground; first the skin of the brow was cut and pulled over the eyes; then the nose, lips, ears, hands, arms, were taken from the body, then the sword pierced through the heart and the body was hewn in pieces. Formerly the flesh was roasted and the fat used to light the four gates of the city, the flesh and the bones cremated and the ashes scattered to the four winds. This punishment required the sanction of a senior officer, as it mutilated the body.

Beheading, *ta p'i* (大辟), is the utmost penalty of the law and the one most dreaded by the Chinese, who all shrink from the idea of becoming a headless ghost. To such an extent is this feared that a head is often sewn on immediately after execution unless it has to be exposed in the person's native village, *hsiao shou* (梟首). The executioner is sometimes bribed to leave a part of the neck unsevered. All such punishments must be sanctioned by the superior officers before they can be carried out. Therefore the whole case has to go through a great many different phases before the execution can take place. Such are as follows:

681 696 *K'ao wên* (考問), to investigate the case and obtain the person's own confession of guilt. Unfortunately this is very often got by torture. After the magistrate has obtained what he thinks sufficient evidence he must notify his superior officer, *hsiang ping* (詳稟), by an official dispatch, giving all details, after which the superior officer sends a deputy to investigate the confession, *ch'ing k'ou kung* (清口供). Much depends upon this man; if not well treated by the district magistrate he might get him into trouble by reporting unfavorably of his judgment. After the criminal has acknowledged his guilt (落供), *lo kung*, he has to dip his thumb in ink and make an impression on the official document.

The criminals hold a feast, *fên li chiu* (分離酒), just before midwinter, which is the general time for executions as

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681 696

at this season the death principle reigns throughout nature. This is a farewell feast to those about to die.

Shang chüeh liao shou chou (上腳鐐手肘) is to put in fetters, hands and feet. As soon as the deputy has confirmed the district magistrate's sentence of death the criminal is chained, hands and feet.

The warrant of death is an official dispatch through which a nail is driven and bent, *ting fêng* (釘封), and sealed. There is also a black tablet sent along with the warrant, which is carried into the gaol when the prisoners are taken out. This is called the *hei p'ai* (黑牌). Whenever the warrant arrives the yamen runners make a raid on the rope-makers for ropes to bind the prisoners, paying nothing; for days before an execution the rope-dealers display few, if any ropes, for fear they will be seized.

When the warrant arrives the official orders wine and food to be set before the doomed men. Sometimes abundance of wine and pork is supplied, at others, only a limited amount. Some drink themselves quite drunk and others only reach the tipsy stage.

Then the hands are bound behind the back and ropes put on the neck, and the tallies are stuck in the band of the criminal's lower garment at the back. These tallies are strips of bamboo a few feet in length and a few inches wide, on which are written the doomed man's name and crime. The characters are written with ink which has been mixed with tea. No teacher likes to use tea in mixing his ink as it is reckoned unlucky.

The fetters are knocked from the hands and feet. This is done by a blacksmith in the roughest way.

The assistant executioner, *t'i shou* (替手), holds the sword in front of the doomed man's face while the real executioner stands at the back to do his work.

The *kuei tzŭ shou* (劊子手), or executioner, belongs to the military yamen. His pay used to be 800 cash per head.

It is the duty of the military official, whose men do the work of execution, to witness it, *chien chan* (監斬).

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

681 696 The district magistrate goes to the temple, burns incense and makes a declaration to the city god that he has not had these men beheaded for any personal spite or selfish ends, but simply because of their own evil deeds. Returning to his yamen, a heap of straw with crackers is set fire to at the entrance, through which he is carried at a furious pace, *kuo huo yen shan* (過火焰山) (passing the flame-hill), for fear any of the disembodied spirits of the men should have followed him. Many of these men vow before death that after death their chief work will be to kill the official. Hence these past months, during the rebellion, it was said that the soldiers of Hades were moving to help them, *yin ping tung liao* (陰兵動了). The people burned straw sandals by the thousand as an offering to these spirits.

After the executions are over the yamen runners arm themselves with clubs and go round and round the yamen, *p'an ya* (盤衙), and enter the official's private quarters, flourishing these clubs to drive away the evil spirits. They make their obeisance to the official, who in turn gives them a present.

Those remaining in gaol after the midwinter executions, as most probably they may live another year, have a feast together, *t'uan yüan chiu* (團圓酒).

If only one person should be left in the government prison, he may be strangled in prison, *chien hou chiao* (監候絞).

IV. *Torture, K'ao ta hsing* (拷打刑).

695 The following are a few of the methods used to extort confession, etc.:

Kuei t'ai ho (跪抬盒), to kneel in the carrying box. This instrument of torture takes its name from the box frame in which presents are carried from one place to another with one pole between two men. The prisoner is made to kneel in this box, sometimes on ashes, sometimes on broken glass or iron chains. A heavy weight is then placed upon the legs, pressing the knees down into the ashes. The hands are passed through the holes on either side and wedged in

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

kuo kou (火鈎), a long pole with a hook on it for pulling down houses, and a *ma ta* (麻搭), or hemp mop on a pole, which is dipped in water and dabbled on freshly ignited places. In recent years force pumps have been introduced. The official orders the pulling down of houses to prevent the fire spreading, and he enquires when and how the fire originated. If a resident started it he will be beaten to expel the fire demon, and if it is not his first offence he may be expelled from the neighbourhood. An incendiary if caught will be put to death, as the crime is of equal gravity with murder and grave-robbing. 647 693

For the official duty of praying for rain, etc., see under Fasts. On the 1st and 15th of each month incense is burned, *chiang hsiang* (降香), in the temple of the city-god *ch'êng huang* (城皇), the god of War, the god of Literature, the god of Fire and perhaps elsewhere. The official may go himself or by deputy. A Mohammedan official will only act by deputy. 647 796

In spring and autumn, at fixed times, sacrifices of five pigs, five sheep and an ox are made to the Sage in the Confucian temple.

Sacrifices to the god of Agriculture are offered in March and September. The god is said to be Shên-Nung (神農) (B.C. 2700). He is also called Hou t'u (后土), and Ti shên (地神). These sacrifices are generally made in a field kept for the purpose, but used for farming between times. The offerings are pigs and sheep.

At the feast in the 7th moon and at Ch'ing ming offerings are made at the *li t'an* (厲壇), or altar of the discontented dead. Piles of paper money are burned in a roofless stone structure usually in the public burying ground. Sometimes the magistrate does this public duty by proxy.

The official does not attend on the execution ground, but he must see the prisoners bound and the heads must be brought back to him. He whips the executioner lest evil influences should be brought by him. (See under *Punishments.*) 647 681

6:Liao S-5 (1943-1945)1947 AF16 Southwest China AF16

575 natures of the branch officials, followed by the name and rank of the recipient; and on the sixth page, the date of issuance.[8]

The second function of the "fifth-moon" assembly is promotion of members in rank. Promotions are granted most often in recognition of heroic or otherwise admirable behavior toward the community or the director, financial contributions to the society, assistance rendered to fellow members, and the like. Members in the upper ranks are much more apt to receive promotions than those of lower degree, who must remain back-benchers indefinitely. Having once gained the position of director, a man relinquishes the post only on his death. Incidentally, the death of a man of such importance as a director is mourned by the entire community, non-members as well as members. The mourning period lasts seven weeks.[9]

575 681 The third function of the "fifth-moon" meeting has to do with punishments of members. The Ko Lao Hui has an extensive code of regulations and disciplines, but the process of change which has affected other aspects of the society has also made this code more or less obsolete. The myriad regulations that were strictly enforced at one stage in the history of the Ko Lao Hui were designed to promote brotherhood, the observance of loyalty and *yi,* filial piety, a proper attitude toward women, patriotism, respect for the aged, and contempt for money. Nowadays there is a marked variation among different branches in the strictness with which rules are observed and infractions punished; the degree depends upon the ethical standards observed by the members in each branch. A man who has violated a regulation of the society is first reproved by the director of his branch or by his intimates. Serious crimes are dealt with at once through a meeting of a few prominent members without waiting for a grand assembly. In consequence, the cases considered at the grand assembly are usually only minor misdemeanors. These are discussed briefly before the director announces the punishment to be applied to each case.

Punishments are divided into several grades: death (by ignominious

[8] This list illustrates the extent to which Ko Lao Hui ritual has accommodated itself to present-day fashions.

[9] After the death of a director in Chung Yi, a large building in the market center was set aside for mourning activities, while numberless couplets, expressing sorrow at the loss of a great leader, and pieces of white silk and sacrifices in the form of goods and money decorated the main street. Mourners came from great distances. Even Sun Yat-sen's death had not created such a stir.

6: Liao S-5 (1943-1945)1947 AF16 Southwest China AF16

slow dismemberment, burial alive or shooting), beating with a rod, beating with a ruler, and public degradation (causing the culprit to kneel on a special bench in public with a red tape on his back describing his crime). Except for the death penalty, punishments are meted out with the intention of correcting rather than hurting members. No one likes to see a fellow-member punished. In fact, although punishments exist in name, in reality most miscreants receive only a warning or reproof. If a case is extremely serious, the criminal is "thrown away"—that is, shot. The society prefers to execute its own members instead of delivering them to the government, for the latter course implies an insult to the whole society. Expulsion from the branch may be substituted for the death penalty; in such an event, the criminal will not be taken in by any other branch.

The second grand assembly of the year, held on the thirtieth day of the twelfth moon, is a time of celebration and house-cleaning, with some gambling and opium-smoking on the side. Neither of these latter activities is regarded as criminal by the society; they bring in vast sums of money to the society exchequer. Since this assembly occurs at (Chinese) New Year, which is celebrated for at least two weeks, members have a grand opportunity for social intercourse. During this meeting there is usually discussion of general society policy and of financial reports, funds are collected from members according to their financial status, elections are held to fill vacant positions, and reports on recent important events are delivered. Often, too, promotions and demotions are announced; this is done particularly in the case of a branch that has more "good" than "bad" members. Steps taken to clear the branch of bad elements are announced, warnings are given to undesirables, and dates are set for the expulsion of major criminals. Every one sits down together to share the last meal of the year, thus symbolizing the unity and brotherhood which bind the members.

THERE ARE several reasons for the spread of the Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan, and for the extension of its activities into so many aspects of present-day society. For one thing, in a country such as China, where law enforcement does not extend to the small hamlets or individual farms, persons sharing similar interests are inclined to band together to protect those interests even though by doing so they may bring disaster upon others. The majority of members possessing real power in the Ko

6: Liao S-5 (1943-1945)1947 AF16 Southwest China AF16

575 Lao Hui of the Chengtu Plain belong to the middle class. Each owns between five and eight acres of land, and derives his income directly or indirectly from the land on which he lives; in addition, he may own a store or two in the market center. These people regard the society as a form of social insurance which will guard the well-being of their families, benefit their business activities, and protect their properties from intrusion, alienation or undue taxation. Initially the Ko Lao Hui arose in response to ultra-conservative needs, for it maintains the social order, upholds accepted standards of behavior, and affords its members protection in case of disaster.[10] Such security is desired most in an area where lawlessness prevails and where provision for Western types of insurance—accident, personal or social—is lacking. The Ko Lao Hui is in fact a mutual assistance association, a means of safeguarding one's property and security through the protection of one's neighbors' property and security.

When a large number of middle-class people band together, they often gain a controlling voice in community affairs; whoever wishes to remain in the community must work either with or against them. As a result, members of the upper class are apt to cooperate with them; sometimes, indeed, because of their superior knowledge of administration, these upper-class representatives may assume the leadership in a society branch. Occasionally, well-educated and social-minded persons must participate in the activities of the society if they wish to remain and work in a community. Lower-class persons, too, discovering that they must depend on the society for a living, enter its lower ranks. The practice of *yi* offers the lower classes a form of insurance against personal misfortune. If a lower-class member falls sick or dies, his family will be looked after. In certain areas, tenants who are members of the Ko Lao Hui cannot be evicted no matter how often ownership of the land may change. If one obeys orders from above, one need have no fear of being unemployed; in the event that such orders contravene government laws, one can depend on being housed and fed and cared for in general while being sought by the government. If a high-ranking member commits a crime and is (for a wonder) energetically pursued by the

575 681

[10] In Chengtu in 1942 the author met a Ko Lao Hui member who, though he had lost all of his limbs and thus his earning power, was nevertheless enjoying the company of four young concubines in a large and well-appointed house. It transpired that his comfortable situation was due entirely to the assumption of his fellow-members that, since he had been a good brother in the society before his misfortune, he now merited the very best treatment.

6: Liao S-5 (1943-1945)1947 AF16 Southwest China AF16

575 681

government, the society will provide and pay for a substitute to confess to the crime and to suffer the consequences in his stead.

Another reason for the continued existence of the Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan is the confusion and disorder which have prevailed there in recent years. During the war the central government, which had established its capital in Szechuan and was anxious to avoid unnecessary unrest, encouraged the provincial government in its lax administration. The attitude of compromise adopted toward most problems fostered the development of localism and gave the Ko Lao Hui an opportunity to increase the scope and variety of its activities to a point where it interfered with many aspects of government administration. In any case, government in Szechuan has been so corrupt for so long that the people have no confidence in it.[11] The war years simply aggravated popular dissatisfaction with and distrust of the government, so that any new official measure is received with suspicion. The people have become accustomed to managing their affairs and settling their disagreements by extra-governmental means. It is natural for them to turn to the local Ko Lao Hui branch director, who represents, in theory at least, the virtues of brotherhood, filial piety and proper behavior toward women. Thus the director has become not only the possessor of power but a symbol of righteousness as well. Disagreements between non-members of the society, as well as between members, are now commonly referred to him for settlement.

575 722

The Ko Lao Hui is not a political party, nor does it entertain any pretensions regarding the shaping of national policy—so long as the interests of its middle-class founders are not endangered. Thus far Ko Lao Hui political activities have remained defensive. Individual members may occupy important government posts, but the society as a whole remains aloof from Kuomintang party politics. The society has voiced sharp criticism of Communism, which it regards as inimical to middle-class interests. While adopting a *laissez-faire* attitude toward politics,

575 662

[11] The demobilization, in the closing years of the Sino-Japanese war, of many Szechuanese troops without adequate provision for their reemployment greatly swelled the number of undesirable members of the society, and in turn made things more difficult for the government. The possession by society members of an extraordinarily large number of small arms aggravates the situation. In the course of his investigation of two districts near Chengtu, the author learned that nearly every member of the Ko Lao Hui in those localities owned a pistol or a rifle. In Chengtu district one out of every two members possessed such arms without a license. Leaders not infrequently had late-model machine guns.